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Today's Book World carries a University of California Press ad for three books, the first of which is The Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro, by Maurice Halperin. The blurb from Publishers' Weekly indicates it is what I'd expect, a definitive work.

Halperin had been a red-baited member of the University of Oklahoma faculty before World War II. When General Donovan was seeking authentic experts and a diversity of good minds, Halperin became head of his Latin American Division. I was then a soldier assigned to the Presentation Division. The two divisions shared the forst floor of the old Washington Auditorium Building, near Interior, about 19 and E, NW. When I got a medical discharge, I was asked to become a consultant to the LAD because of my investigative experience in economic matters, soon used to investigate Nazi cartels and other Nazi influences in Latin America, particularly Argentina. (This was the first of two similar projects, the first for the use of Nelson Rockefeller and others at the organizational meeting at Chapultepec, prior to the organizational meeting of the Un in San Francisco, the second came to be called "The Blue Book" on Argentina. With the second, I began incharge of the military parts. However, the more I thought about it the more convinced it became that with the different context and timing it was bad policy. I asked to be and was releived of my responsibilities for any part in the document itself, but I continued to do simple things others apparently couldn't, like borrowing Recordak microfilim facilities. I was soon enough proven right. I said the Blue Book would be greeted universally in LA as Yanke efforts to dominate, as it was. Even the anti-Peron Communist parties denounced it.)

LAD was switched to State when OSS was broken up. For some reason I never knew, and I knew him only as a friendly boss, not having known him earlier, Halperin left the government for a succession of other good jobs, from which he was hounded. He was on the faculty at Boston College, represented some Jewish group at the UN, etc. He was steeped in Yiddish tradition. He was a language expert, I think by training. He was also an excellent political analyst. Whatever his politics, and I never knew them, except it is obvious he was not right-wing, they didn't show in the work or the staff, which did include perhaps a majority of the right.

The pogram in which I was ultimatelu caught up came some time after his departure. About that time it came out that he had been at the home of a prominent New Deal economist as a guest when Elizabeth Bentley was also there. When we were finally fighting back over these dismissals without charges or hearings, under the McCarran rider, Bert Andrews, then NYHerald Tribune Bureau Chief, interviewed J. Edgar Hoover, who told him there was really nothing against us and that is we had been his employees, he'd merely have told a couple that they were keeping questionable company. Andrews is my source on this.

Halperin ultimately emigrated to Mexico, when everything he did in the US was ruined for him. I guess he became unemployable. He became quite successful in Mexico as an economic consultant. But US influence was brought to bear on the Mexican government to force him out, from what I heard from a friend of his who was later organizer of Eggheads for Eisenhower. It is this that led to his exile in Cuba. I don't know if this ad and book mean he has returned. I do recall that after he got to Cuba he wrote a few pieces for The National Guardian before it was taken away from those who established it.

His wife was a schoolteacher. I think this political pressure had or almost had some influence on the marriage or planned marriage of his daughter and a young rabbi. My recollection here is unclear. It may have involved the young man's family rather than him. I had no first-hand knowledge.

Halperin was an authentic Latin American expert, open-minded, not turned off by the nature of sources as long as they were reasonably dependable. I remember his referring me to a book done by an Army colonel, saying it was the best in the field for a general background. So, he was not per se anti-military.

From my recollections of him I would presume his ($12.50) book is everything this PW blurb says and more. He had years of personal experience in Mexico and Cuba to add to his academic background, which was in itself enormous. I suspect that at least to begin with he was trusted in Cuba and drawn upon, although again I have no knowledge. He is a man of that intellectual stature. I think the Cubans would have wanted to use him. I do not know what he did there, don't think I ever heard.

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